



QuEd up for Education

People and programs impacting our QCSD community

QCHS students achieve elite academic status

Mikayla Fuentes, Adria Retter qualify as National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.



Adria Retter, the high school's record holder in the discus with a throw of 127 feet, is also an academic all-star. She scored a 1480 out of a maximum 1520 on the PSAT, 1560 out of 1600 on the SAT and 35 of 36 on the ACT.

By Gary Weckselblatt

Two Quakertown Community High School seniors -- Mikayla Fuentes and Adria Retter -- have qualified as National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.

The students are among only 16,000 semifinalists nationwide, selected from more than 1.6 million entrants in the scholarship contest. According to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Semifinalists represent the top 0.5 percent of the state's senior students.

"I'm thrilled for the students and for their families," Superintendent Dr. Bill Harner said. "This speaks volumes for the quality education our teachers are providing here in Quakertown."

David Finnerty, the high school principal, said "Both of these students are amazing young ladies. Beyond their achievement in the academic realm, they are highly involved in their school community. I'm proud to have them here."

The Quakertown students produced outstanding scores on the Preliminary SAT, which serves as the qualifying test for the program entrants. Mikayla scored 1490 and Adria 1480 out of a maximum 1520.

"It is really exciting to be part of this competition," said Mikayla, who's involved in chorus and theater programs, both at the high school and in the community. "With college coming around the corner, it's really cool to have this on the resume."

Adria, QCHS's record-holder in the discus with a throw of 127 feet, said she thought the National Merit was possible when she received her PSAT score last spring. "I'm really grateful that I got it," she said. "It's definitely exciting."

Both students praised guidance counselors for their help in answering questions and said taking the PSAT as sophomores, not something

done at all high schools, helped them as juniors.

"I really love this school," Mikayla said.

The PSAT wasn't the only test they excelled in. Each student aced the ACT exam, scoring 35 out of a possible 36. On The SAT's, Adria notched 1560 and Mikayla 1510 out of 1600.

"They are exemplary students," Dr. Harner said.

As they begin their college searches, neither is certain of their post-Quakertown destination.

"I'm really indecisive about school because I'm not really sure what I want to do," said Mikayla, who mentioned Fordham University in New York and Drew University in New Jersey as possibilities. "I'm looking at schools from Boston to Maryland."

Mikayla is considering majoring in secondary education, and perhaps becoming an English teacher. But she wants to also study theater.

Adria said she is torn between becoming a doctor or a biomedical engineer. She's wary of becoming a doctor for family considerations. In addition, she said, "Doctors help one person at a time. You can help many more people by creating something."

Adria said she'll apply early action to Princeton, which is non-binding. She's also interested in Bucknell, Lafayette and Lehigh.

The 64th annual National Merit Scholarship Program will award 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$31 million that will be offered next spring. More than 90 percent of the Semifinalists, like Adria and Mikayla, are expected to attain Finalist standing, and about half of the Finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship.

Gary Weckselblatt, QCSD Director of Communications, writes about the people and the programs that impact the Quakertown Community School District. He can be reached at 215-529-2028 or gweckselblatt@qcscd.org.



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**David Finnerty,
Principal**